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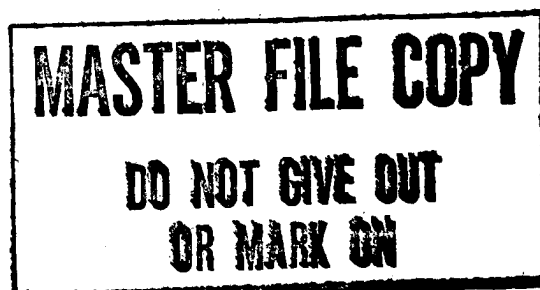
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Special National Intelligence Estimate

Soviet Strategic and Political Objectives in Arms Control in 1985

Key Judgments



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SOVIET STRATEGIC AND POLITICAL OBJECTIVES IN ARMS CONTROL IN 1985

KEY JUDGMENTS

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THIS ESTIMATE IS ISSUED BY THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE.

THE NATIONAL FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE BOARD CONCURS, EXCEPT AS NOTED IN THE TEXT.

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of the Estimate:

The Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, and the intelligence organization of the Department of State.

Also Participating:

The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army

The Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy

The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force

The Director of Intelligence, Headquarters, Marine Corps

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SCOPE NOTE

This Estimate examines the Soviet approach to the arms control process through the end of 1985; unless otherwise indicated, its judgments are not intended to extend beyond that period. It does not attempt to provide a detailed preview of Soviet negotiating tactics or possible bargaining packages. Rather, it considers both the broad outlines of Soviet strategy within the negotiations and the political and propaganda campaign whereby the Soviets will attempt both to influence US negotiating positions and to achieve their goals without having to make significant concessions in the talks. It also considers how the Soviets view the relationship between their arms control goals and other objectives worldwide. (S NF)

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KEY JUDGMENTS

The USSR's primary objective in the renewed arms control process is to avert a situation in which sustained US military programs undercut Soviet strategic advantages achieved through past and current force modernizations, and possibly give critical new advantages to the United States in the 1990s and beyond. The Soviets want to protect and, if possible, strengthen their own strategic force capabilities while trying to constrain US and NATO force modernization programs—above all, the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). (S NF)

The Soviets will probe for opportunities to accomplish this in the negotiations themselves, and they hope to increase and exploit political opposition to US programs in the United States and Western Europe. Their efforts will be directed toward getting the United States to cancel key US strategic weapons programs, and toward dividing the European NATO nations from the United States and encouraging them to put pressure on the United States on strategic issues. (S NF)

We expect that during 1985 the thrust of Soviet activities will focus on public diplomacy. Nevertheless, we believe that the Soviets' failure to date to block NATO INF deployments and their apparent respect for the US administration's ability to defend its major weapons programs in Congress will have tempered the Soviets' expectations as to the effectiveness of their public relations efforts. We should, therefore, not be surprised—more likely next year than this year—if the Soviets were to make some changes in their initial negotiating positions at Geneva, particularly as modest demonstrations of flexibility could enhance the impact of their propaganda efforts. US positions in the talks will of course also affect Soviet strategy. (S)

Moscow's arms control campaign will be concurrently aimed at achieving a wide range of collateral objectives, such as reviving a mood of detente in Western Europe aimed at securing economic benefits, reassuring East European allies, complicating Chinese efforts to derive diplomatic leverage from US-Soviet differences, and encouraging Western tolerance of the Soviet role in the Middle East, South Asia, and Latin America. (S NF)

Soviet strategy and tactics in arms control negotiations over the next year will be shaped by:

- A realistic appraisal that the threats posed by the development and deployment of US systems are not immediate.

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- The more favorable prospects for using political means rather than negotiated agreements to limit that evolution.
- The expectation that political and strategic benefits will be realized as Soviet strategic programs now under development become operational. (C NF)

The Soviets are unlikely to see a major threat to their strategic position stemming from new US systems coming on line during the time frame of this Estimate. They also understand that:

- A comprehensive US ballistic missile defense system lies well in the future.
- Deployment of a number of major new offensive systems (including MX and D-5) is not in the immediate offing, and that in some cases deployment remains clouded by political debate. (S NF)

Thus, the Soviets are unlikely to feel a need to quickly achieve a major agreement in the Geneva negotiations, although nervousness over a possible US technological breakthrough in ballistic missile defense conceivably persuades them that they do not have forever to attain constraints on US programs. The difficulties of economic and military planning for a future made more uncertain and challenging by US military programs, especially SDI, weigh on the minds of Soviet leaders. In a period of manifold economic problems, they would prefer an environment in which they can set their own pace of force modernization, which existing Soviet programs indicate will be vigorous in any case, rather than additionally having to hedge against new US capabilities. We believe, however, that this consideration will not prompt any significant concession from the Soviets during the period of this Estimate. (S NF)

Initially, Moscow probably intends to hold firm at Geneva on its present positions while pressing the United States to make concessions that will allow for "real progress." It is likely that initially the Soviets will seek in the talks:

- *On space and defensive weapons*, a ban or moratorium on space-based and antisatellite weapons and hold the prospect of any significant agreement on offensive systems hostage to this demand.
- *On intermediate-range nuclear forces*, a moratorium on further INF deployments and compensation for British and French systems.
- *On strategic nuclear weapons*, a US commitment to continued observance of SALT I and II restraints. In addition, the Soviets

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will resist any US attempts to reduce significantly the number of Soviet ICBMs or their throw weight, and they are likely to float proposals aimed at constraining D-5 and cruise missile deployments. The Soviets are unlikely to offer substantial reductions in their strategic offensive forces in return for US restraints on SDI because they probably are not yet convinced that SDI is technologically or politically viable and will be very reluctant to trade off systems in being for systems not yet deployed or deployable. (s NF)

Moscow's 19 March proposed omnibus joint declaration is in line with these judgments. (s NF)

Moscow's overall political strategy for undercutting US policies is broadly shaped by its belief that the US administration has been under pressure at home and from US Allies to engage seriously in arms negotiations, that a number of US defense programs face strong opposition from segments of the American public and in the Congress, and that there are conflicts over them within the administration itself. The Soviets aim to build public and Allied pressure on the administration to demonstrate that it is "serious" in seeking progress in Geneva by curtailing its strategic programs or making concessions on other arms control issues without Moscow's having to offer any quid pro quo. The Soviets will seek to counter the administration's argument that support of its defense programs enhances arms control prospects, and to encourage the view that defeat or deceleration of these programs will clear the way to progress in the talks and even to other favorable shifts in Soviet policies, such as that on human rights, including Jewish emigration.

In Europe, the Soviets are mounting a major effort to persuade NATO and other governments to put pressure on the United States, the Dutch and Belgian Governments to resist INF deployment, and West Europeans at large that US policies recklessly threaten world peace and particularly the security of Europe. Besides pressing its arguments through diverse diplomatic channels and a large propaganda and disinformation network—probably including forgeries, covert press placements, and agents of influence—the Kremlin will attempt to reinvigorate the peace movement, court West European opposition parties, place before European businessmen the incentive of greater export opportunities, establish new propaganda channels, and exploit international gatherings.

The basic political strategy toward the arms control process outlined above will undoubtedly be modified by the Soviets in minor ways as they assess US proposals and, more important, signals emerging from US and European polities. We believe, however, that the Soviets

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are very likely to stick to the broad outline depicted above for at least the first six months of the renewed Geneva negotiations and probably longer. (S NF)

General Secretary Gorbachev's accession to power will not suddenly transform Soviet arms control policies, although he is likely to use any flare for personal diplomacy in an attempt to increase the political pressure on the United States for concessions. More significant for Soviet arms control behavior, though, will be the power structure in the ruling oligarchy in terms of its stability, its cohesiveness, and the strength of Gorbachev's authority. Soviet hints of "new lines" on arms control and East-West relations may emerge during the next few months. They could be genuine probes for areas of agreement, but they are more likely in the near term to represent tactical efforts to play on disagreements in the West. (S NF)

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